



## **United States Botanic Garden**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

### **USBG Seeks “Sustainability Themed Exhibits” for Summer 2008**

**Deadline: Declaration of Interest – COB October 1, 2007  
Proposal – COB October 30, 2007**

#### **Overview:**

Each year from Memorial Day through Columbus Day, the United States Botanic Garden (USBG) presents temporary exhibits around the Conservatory and in the outdoor gardens. It has become a Washington tradition for office workers, visitors from across the nation and around the world, and Capitol Hill staff to relax or picnic on the Terrace in view of the U.S. Capitol surrounded by beautiful, themed gardens and exhibits.

For 2008, the USBG is inviting organizations; municipal, state, or federal government agencies; and public gardens to contribute to these exhibits and programs surrounding the theme of sustainability.

1. On the Conservatory Terrace, participants will have an area for a garden “room,” a structure, or a demonstration that illustrates or incorporates an aspect of sustainability.
2. In the out door gardens, sculptures or smaller structures, will placed to demonstrate or represent sustainability concepts.
3. In the gardens there will also be interpretive and pictorial panels on sustainable practices.
4. There is also the opportunity work with us on programming, classes, and Family Day Events through out the summer.

The purpose of the exhibits is to provide an informative and attractive demonstration of the design and implementation of sustainable practices as they apply to gardens, garden practices, and living in our landscape more sustainably. We hope that you will consider submitting a proposal for one of the above or some combination.

The following summary is designed to answer most questions and to lay out guidelines for exhibit participation, but please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

## **USBG 2008 Sustainability Exhibits & Programming**

### **1. Description of Summer Exhibits:**

The USBG mounts summer exhibits that are on display from Memorial Day through Columbus Day weekend each year. The USBG is located on the National Mall adjacent to the U.S. Capitol. The portion of the exhibit on the flagstone terrace surrounding the historic Conservatory is a series of 'rooms' that are accessible 24/7. The adjacent National Garden is fenced and locked each night and will host sculptures, interpretive structures and sign panels. Bartholdi Park has no fence and is open from dawn to dusk.

The summer exhibit is well publicized and very popular, often drawing more than 300,000 visitors and national media interest.

### **2. Description of displays:**

- a. Terrace:** The Conservatory Terrace can be divided into a maximum of 12 unique display spaces differing in size, shape, and exposure. Each participant will design and implement a garden, structure, or demonstration that incorporates aspects of sustainable design, technology, and/or construction. Participants will also provide text for interpretive materials for their entry. Each display should include a seating area and shade. Furniture, structures, or plantings (see section 6 below) may be used to provide divisions between the rooms. Unless otherwise arranged, maintenance of the exhibits will be the responsibility of the USBG.
- b. National Garden:** Sites are available in the National Garden for erecting smaller structures or sculptures that interpret sustainability and demonstrate or provide some aspect of education. Planted containers may be used to provide context for the sculpture or to soften their presence in the landscape. *The footprint for the structures should be 50 sq. ft. or less.*
- c. National Garden:** will also be utilized for interpretive and pictorial panels
- d. Front garden:** The turf area adjacent to Maryland and First Avenues are possible sites for exhibits.
- e. Bartholdi Park:** may be used for additional sites if needed.
- f. Programming:** We would like each participant to participate in at least one lecture, class or programs during the run of the exhibit.

### **3. Location and Site Constraints:**

- a.** The USBG Conservatory is located at 100 Maryland Avenue SW, across First Street SW from the United States Capitol. A plan view of the Conservatory Terrace, the National Garden, and Bartholdi Park is attached. All entries will be assigned locations by the USBG, however if you have a preference please make that request.
- b.** Security is provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and follows 24-hr. surveillance protocols established for the U.S. Capitol Complex.
- c.** Please consider the following in creating your garden or structure design.
  - i.** Daily temperature fluctuations are seasonably variable on the paved terrace and range from 50°F to 105°F with summer days in the low 90s. Summer

nights typically remain warm and reflected heat and light from the flagstone paving and limestone façade should be a design consideration.

- ii. Gardens are typically hand watered as automatic irrigation is not available unless incorporated into your exhibit.
  - iii. Terrace exhibit locations (see attached site map) #1-6 receive full sun most of the day; locations 7-10 receive direct sun until about 1 p.m., indirect sun in the afternoon, and are shaded by the building in late afternoon.
  - iv. Bartholdi Park and the National Garden exhibits will be in full sun.
  - v. On the terrace winds are highly variable although most of the spaces receive some protection from the Conservatory. The corner at locations #6 and #7 typically receives the most wind. There is a very small risk of high winds from hurricanes that travel up the Atlantic Coast. Wind gusts of 70 mph sometimes occur during thunderstorms. Tall structures should withstand wind and deter climbing.
  - vi. Safety is an overriding concern; all designs will be evaluated by our safety officer.
- 4. The USBG may be able to supply, if requested:**
- a. Table, four chairs, and umbrella for the terrace displays.
  - b. Various sizes of planters with trellises
  - c. Masonry, terra cotta, faux granite, or wooden containers in a variety of styles, colors, and sizes
  - d. Loan of plant material from our permanent collections
  - e. Staff from the USBG horticulture and operations divisions to assist in the installation and takedown of the exhibit.
  - f. Volunteers and docents to deliver hands on activities at discovery carts that are representative of your programs; your institution will have to assist with training and any specialty items that are required.
  - g. You are welcome to make other requests.
- 5. Schedule:**
- Both construction and dismount will be coordinated and scheduled for each participating institution by the USBG. Construction of the gardens will be from mid-April to mid-May and must be completed no later than May 22, 2008. Dismount of the exhibit will begin October 14 and must be completed by October 31, 2008.
- 6. Logistics:**
- a. The USBG anticipates the selection of participants by early October with an initial meeting or conference call scheduled thereafter. The USBG exhibit curator will be available to you throughout the planning and installation process to assist with problem solving, design adjustments to your plan, and other details. Your organization may be assigned a secondary USBG staff person to assist in coordination.
  - b. Site visits during the process are encouraged. The current exhibits, Celebrating America's Public Gardens, close on Columbus Day.

- c. Logistics for arrival, unloading, and assembly will be determined after participants are selected and depend on the specific requirements. Due to security around the Capitol all incoming trucks go through a screening process. Shipping directly to the USBG is problematic needs to be carefully coordinated. Shipments to our Production Facility is possible.

## **7. Proposal Requirements:**

Your proposal is a preliminary statement about your plans at this time and need not contain all details. This information will be used to judge the potential of your entry to contribute to the overall success of the exhibit.

- a. Overview of your Institution - Provide the name, address, website, mission, and brief description of your institution or organization.
- b. Point of Contact: Include the name and contact information for the person who will be responsible for your entry.
- c. Concept Design and Narrative: Submit a one-page narrative description of your display plan and include a conceptual drawing or design. This should indicate if your proposal is for a built exhibit (on the terrace), interpretive panels (in the gardens), a sculpture or figurative piece (in gardens), programming and classes, or some combination.
- d. Preferred location: National Garden or Terrace location. If your preference is based on horticultural needs, please state the justification.
- e. A list of the plants, furniture, containers, or other materials that you hope to borrow from the USBG.
- f. A list of the plants, furniture, objects, or other materials that you propose to supply for your entry.
- g. A brief list or description of any special site requirements (e.g., connection to water or electricity, overhead construction, new masonry, construction of raised beds over the flagstone, etc.).
- h. A basic maintenance plan or overview of what your entry will require for maintenance during the exhibit period.

## **8. Funding:**

USBG expects that most participants will be able to fund their project. However, if you would like to participate but can do so only on a cost-share basis, please include the exhibit budget and the cost-share plan that you propose.

Be aware that once selections have been made, it may be determined that for a unified look USBG contracts for and funds the fabrication of signs and panels.

## **9. Participant Selection Criteria:**

The USBG will select participants based on the quality and feasibility of executing the designs. The overall concept is that a visitor to the exhibit will experience a diversity of techniques, innovations, technology, ideas, practices, and designs that make gardening, homes and landscapes more sustainable. Each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- a. Clarity of proposal

- b. Feasibility of executing the proposed design
- c. Feasibility of maintaining the garden or structure
- d. Addition of diversity of themes or principles of sustainability
- e. Relevance to private citizens and visitors.

**10. Site Visit:**

We encourage you to visit the USBG to see the current summer exhibit prior to October 8, 2007. Please make an appointment in advance so that appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions. However, if that is not possible, images of this summer exhibits can be provided.

**11. Deadline: Please indicate you intent to participate before October 1, 2007  
Proposals should be received by COB p.m. EDT, October 30, 2007.**

**12. Submittal Address:** Submit two copies of your proposal by U.S. Postal Service or electronic files in PDF format to:

Ray Mims  
Conservation Horticulturist  
USBG Production Facility  
4700 Shepherd Parkway  
Washington, DC 20032  
202-226-4067 or 202.409.1659  
[rmims@aoe.gov](mailto:rmims@aoe.gov)